Judaism began around 2000 B.C. when Abraham made a divine covenant with God. The Torah is the first five books of the Christian Bible. The Talmud is a collection of stories, laws, medical knowledge, and other documents. The basic belief of Judaism is that God exists, and He is unique, spiritual, and eternal. Another belief is that Moses, the greatest prophet, was given the Torah from God on Mt. Sinai. They believe that the Messiah is yet to come. Jewish obey Kosher Practices such as no eating of pork, shellfish, rodents, reptiles, amphibians, and insects, and meat cannot be eaten with dairy. The Rabbi teaches in synagogues. They become a holy teacher by passing an examination on the Torah, and the Talmud. They study at a Yeshiva, which is like a holy school. Rabbis, unlike the Pope, may marry and have children. Jewish children begin adulthood at around age thirteen. A ceremony is held to usher them into this new age. Boys have a Bar Mitzvah, and girls have a Bat Mitzvah. Some important holidays in the Jewish culture include, Rash Hashanah, Passover, Yom Kippur, Hanukkah, and Shavout.

Rash Hashanah marks the start of the Jewish year. The words Rash Hashanah is Hebrew for start of the year. Rosh Hashanah usually lasts for two days. It is a day of celebration and relaxation. This special holiday is held on the first day of the seventh month on the Jewish calendar. On Rash Hashanah, the traditional Shofar is played. The Shofar is a trumpet made out of a ram’s horn. Much of the day is spent in the synagogue. The traditional greeting is “Be inscribed and sealed for a good year.” Although there are many different foods eaten throughout the day, sweet foods are in abundance. They eat apples dipped in honey, tzimmes (sweet carrot stew), and Jewish Hallah bread. In addition a pomegranate is usually placed on the table because they have 613 seeds symbolizing the number of commandments the Jews are supposed to follow.

Another major holiday in the Jewish calendar is Passover. Passover is told in a story in the bible. “The Children of Egypt had been slaves in Egypt for 210 years. God promised he would release them from slavery, but not before Pharaoh had refused their release and God had visited ten plagues on Egypt to demonstrate his power. (Exodus 3: 19-20)” The tenth plague was a plague on the firstborn son of every household. As the story goes, each household in Egypt was to sacrifice a healthy lamb and put its blood on the door frames of the homes. This was done so the angel knew which homes were the ones of Israelites. If this order of events was followed, an angel would pass over the home and spare the firstborn son from death. After the angel had passed-over, the families were to roast the lamb and eat every bite of it. Then they were to burn the bones. However, if the angel sees no sign of blood on the door, they will proceed to enter the home and take the life of the first-born son. The people of Egypt had a problem with these actions. They begged the Pharaoh to banish the Israelites. Pharaoh then ordered Moses to get the Israelites out of Egypt.